Riddle and Finns: Top service and smooth tech integration

We spoke to Jonathan Davis, General Manager of Riddle and Finns in Brighton, about running two high-end seafood restaurants. Jonathan explains how he’s leveraging the Planday and Lightspeed integration to get a better overview of the operations and make better decisions. He also highlights that top service is at the core of the experience, but that caring for staff is equally as high on the agenda.

Approachable seafood with service to match

Riddle and Finns run two restaurants in Brighton, both of which are unique in their own right. In the city center we have the laid back New York-style oyster bar with high marble-top tables. Our second location is on the Brighton beachfront, which owes its more traditional atmosphere to the lovely Victorian arches on the promenade.

Above all, we want people to feel special. We want to create memories. We also don’t want anyone to feel like they need any prerequisite knowledge of seafood to enjoy it. Good seafood is always quite special, because still it’s a niche market, so our aim is to create an environment that makes it as easy as possible for customers to enjoy themselves.

Across both sites, we employ between 60 and 70 staff members all year round, although that increases in the summer as Brighton gets busier. Although some staff work across both our locations, our kitchen staff stay only at one, which helps with consistency and quality.

Planday and Lightspeed: Seamless Integration

We use Lightspeed as our POS system and Planday for our rota scheduling, as the integration between the two provides an ideal solution for us. When we switched to Lightspeed, we also switched our whole system over to Apple, which means we use iPads for everything and all of our data is available at the touch of a button. Monitoring our labour costs and mapping that onto revenue is easy with our setup, because Planday and Lightspeed work really well together and they give us the information that we need to make the best business decisions in real time.

Our revenue is synched from Lightspeed to Planday over the course of the day, so we can see our ongoing labour costs at the click of a button. If we have a quieter day, the managers can react to it right away, because they can see exactly how much revenue is coming in and exactly how many staff they have on the rota.

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Managing staff rota with ease
Before Planday, we used a very old-school rota system done manually on Excel. It used to take me a whole day to schedule and plan everything. Planday is such a massive help, as it’s the first time in my career in hospitality that I have everything in one place. Before working here, I was used to staff writing down their hours on a piece of paper, which I then had to store, count up and process manually. They would sometimes get lost and it would take weeks for us to approve staff holidays.

When you have up to 70 staff, it’s not possible to catch up with every individual every week, so the fact that you can tell everyone what’s going on at the time is highly valued.

With Planday onboard, it takes me maximum three hours to do all of the admin work, which is amazing as it frees up my time for other important tasks. Overall, I find the system to be really easy to use and innovative, because you can clearly see who you are working with and what their needs are. You can instantly see their shift pattern, holiday requests and generate accurate payslip information that is ready to go directly to our accountant. The staff are especially glad that they can see how many holiday days they have left at the click of a button.

Communication is key
Another aspect we highly appreciate is communicating through the Messaging feature and having our newsletter on there. When you have up to 70 staff, it’s not possible to catch up with every individual every week, so the fact that you can tell everyone what’s going on at the time is highly valued. Similarly, when we change the menus or have new wine tasting notes to remember, we are able to upload PDF documents for everyone to review before coming for their shift, so they are fully prepared ahead of time.

Especially when we onboard, it makes me very proud to present Planday to a new hire, because it sets the tone right away and shows that our establishment is truly professional and cares about its staff. In those moments, you can really feel the system’s value and know that you’ve done the right thing.

Planday brings us together in a way that we couldn’t before and that’s what all teams need, whether they are in hospitality or not. At the end of the day, if you look after your staff, they will look after you and that’s what it’s all about.

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General Manager of Riddle and Finns, Brighton